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Proposed Roads to Freedom. By BERTRAND RUSSELL. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1919. Pp. xviii+218. \$1.50.

The majority of economists who are attracted to this book by the incontestable brilliance of its author will probably conclude very shortly that the book is not for them. In a certain sense this is true. In the discussion of Marx and the socialist doctrine, Bakunin and anarchism, and the "C.G.T." and the syndicalist revolt, there is little to command the careful study of the seasoned scholar. The historical surveys are extremely general, and the analyses of doctrine do not abound in the usual subtleties of economic theory. The same criticism must be made of the author's own proposals, in the second and larger portion of the volume, for dealing with the problems of the future. Economists are, by the logic of their profession, driven to place a very high rating upon the painstaking elaboration of the detailed ramifications of the economic order, and they will be very quick to perceive the absence of convincing particularization. To them the *Proposed Roads to Freedom* will appear like milky ways, from nothing to nothing, and with nothing on either side. They will note with interest that Russell's path is roughly charted between communism on one side and anarchism on the other. They will be interested in the high place he assigns to guild socialism as the archetype upon which the new social order is to be largely built; but they will be totally repelled by his lofty disregard of the terrific difficulty which attends the filling in of the details of scenery, to the need for which he seems so mystically oblivious.

For example, in resolving the difficulty of the tyrant state of socialism and the tyrant individual of anarchism Russell leans very heavily upon the notion of the guild, the small democratic unit to which is intrusted the direction of strictly local affairs. Now of course there is no such thing as "local" affairs. The trouble with the guild idea, as the economist sees it, is that the present social order, and any one that seems likely to come out of it, is so enormously complex and interdependent in all its parts that no local affair is so minute as not to have any general bearing upon the fate of the entire system. Pointedly, the economist's answer to guild socialism is the jurisdictional dispute. Again, the solution of the international problem is that a world full of happiness—the chief obstacles to which exist in the hearts of men—will not wish to go to war. Very likely that is true, the economist will retort, but what is to be done about immigration? To restrict it is to refuse aid to the suffering people of overpopulated countries, to decree that our civilization is for us only; to remove restrictions may be to allow the heaven to be so diluted by the whole lump that not even we shall maintain our

hard-won culture. The elimination in one or even a few spots of the earth of property greed and envy will not remove these difficulties nor silence the economist who must face them.

In another sense, however, this book is one that every special student of society ought to read; for the special student is dealing with the inconceivably intricate adjustments of the institutional order, attempting to grasp some of the refinements of the social process, always with a view to rebuilding the social edifice on an improved pattern, or at least preventing wholesale deterioration. He may feel that no modification can be successful that is not built into the existing structure, so that no vital part is ever dislocated; he may even go farther to the conviction that when any large portion of the edifice is thrown down it cannot be reconstructed except on the plan of the only order of which we have any detailed knowledge, namely our own; but with all this he needs to have constantly floating before his eyes a vision, shadowy, unsubstantial, utterly impractical as a substitute for the blueprint builder's plan, of the ideal for the completed structure.

In this sense *Proposed Roads to Freedom* deserves the study of every economist because its author is not an economist but a mystic. He is a man with a vision. His description of the great subversive *isms* is not critical but inspired. He sees underneath the fallen leaves of fanatical verbiage the rich loam of human aspiration which has nourished all the religions of revolt. His human instincts are very keen and his emotions very wholesome when he comes to take the reckoning of the social order. What men want is not mere physical comfort—freedom from poverty as such—it is a decent life, the chance to do something and be something. And his vision of a world of free men is the vision of a poet:

The world that we seek is a world in which the creative spirit is alive, in which life is an adventure full of joy and hope, based rather upon the impulse to construct than upon the desire to retain what we possess or to seize what is possessed by others. It must be a world in which affection has free play, in which love is purged of the instinct for domination, in which cruelty and envy have been dispelled by happiness and the unfettered development of all the instincts that build up life and fill it with mental delights. Such a world is possible; it waits only for men to wish to create it.

Bertrand Russell does not present the economist with full specifications and blueprints attached for the complete construction of such a world. He has seen truth and beauty with the eyes of a saint rather than of an economist. Yet perhaps even saints should come into the calculations of the economist.

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